

Dear Sissi,

3/12/84

It is long enough after our several hours on the phone for me to have the fire going fairly well - nothing but a few coals were left before we finished - and it'll be warm enough for supper and warmer for the cold night ahead. While at this chore I was thinking about our conversation and how often you were so apologetic. It is about this that I write. It is very nice of you to be concerned, but please do not worry or let the worry discourage you. It is not a real burden and if it were I'd still feel obligated to help as best I can. If you call at an inopportune time, I'll tell you. If I have to stop, I'll tell you.

While I would not have elected it, I am in a public role and to the degree possible I try to serve it.

Besides, we like both you and Henry, and that has nothing to do with agreeing or disagreeing about the content of the book. I am sure that when this is all over, if you do not realize it now, you will look back and understand that I have not been trying to change the book to conform to what I believe, not trying to tell Henry what to believe and/or write. I have been trying to call attention to what I regard as flaws in the book and vulnerabilities after it is out.

I have also been concerned about Henry will regard his work long after it is completed, how even he will think about himself with respect to portions of it.

Henry's problems grew more serious when time pressed more heavily on him and I do believe that if he rereads Chapter 11, for example, two years from now he may see as I now believe that he could have said exactly what he says other than he said it and believe he would have said it better and more effectively. Not for the vast uninformed audience that is without knowledge and is at the mercy of the writer but for the informed, the thinking and sophisticated, and for himself. When the passion of political thought and writing does not drive him he'll see that he was biased and showed it and that he could still have been biased and not show it.

I told him long ago that he would be making appearances when the book is out and then might be confronted and embarrassed. I am not going to take up cudgels against him but close to a year ago I could see where he was going and how and pitfalls. Maybe he'll be lucky and partisans will not criticize him, but informed partisans, like Schlesinger or perhaps Sorensen can pick a few things I've seen and do much with them.

I'm sorry I skipped the first part of my notes, looking hastily for what are strictly factual errors, because it might have been better for your immediate understanding if as we did later we'd discussed some of the more general comments. If you'd like and have time we can do that later. But I do think with regard to this and I think the two earlier chapters, it would be good for Henry and the book if you can go over them and prepare him for what he just might have to face.

It is possible to defend some of the things I'd not like to defend, such as the one-sidedness of the sources cited in this chapter and the real undependability of some of the persons cited as dependable, like David Lewis in this chapter and earlier Delphine Roberts.

Anyway, please be assured that you are not a bother, that if I ought not talk when you phone I'll tell you and we can talk later, and that agreeing with what Henry writes is no more a factor than agreeing with all the other people I do not agree with and still try to help when they ask for help. Most of the reporters, for example, I know will not report what I'd like to see reported and will write what I do not like or agree with. I still spend what time they want me to spend. ... Besides, as I said, we like you both.

Best wishes,